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one of the logarithms of a given quaternion  $q'$ , to a given base  $q$ , is found to involve two independent whole numbers  $n$  and  $n'$ , as in the theories of Graves and Ohm, respecting the general logarithms of ordinary imaginary quantities to ordinary imaginary bases.

For other developments and applications of the new theory, it is necessary to refer to the original paper from which this abstract is taken, and which will probably appear in the twenty-first volume of the Transactions of the Academy.

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November 30. (Stated Meeting.)

REV. H. LLOYD, D.D., Vice-President, in the Chair.

The Rev. Dr. Todd, V.P., presented to the Academy, in his name and that of Mr. O'Donovan, a volume containing tracings made from Irish MSS. preserved in the College of St. Isidore at Rome, by the Rev. Dr. Lyons, who had sent them from Rome, some to Mr. O'Donovan, and the remainder to Dr. Todd.

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The thanks of the Academy were voted to Mr. O'Donovan and also to the Rev. Dr. Lyons, for the important service he has rendered to Irish literature, by making known the existence of these MSS.

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The Rev. Dr. Todd made some remarks on the progress of the Catalogue, made by Mr. Eugene Curry, of the Irish MSS. in the Library of the Academy.

The miscellaneous character of the MSS., almost every volume of them containing tracts or poems, wholly unconnected with each other, rendered it impossible to attempt any previous classification. Mr. Curry, therefore, took the MSS. in the order in which they stood on the shelves of the Library, hoping that all the important objects of a classifica-

tion might be attained by the means of proper Indexes after the work is completed.

The method pursued was to give a description of the contents of each volume, enumerating the several tracts of which it consists, describing its state of preservation, noticing, as far as possible, its defects or imperfections, and identifying, whenever it could be done, the handwriting of the scribe or scribes by whom it had been written. Particular attention has been paid to the history of every important MS.; the quotations made from it by historians or lexicographers have been verified, and, where practicable, the various hands through which it has passed, and the means by which it became the property of the Academy, have been accurately detailed and recorded.

In this way many opportunities have occurred of correcting mistakes which have been made by various writers on Irish subjects—mistakes, which must always be numerous in the history of a people, whose ancient literature is still in manuscript, and in a language which is every day becoming more obsolete and obscure. These mistakes Mr. Curry has always corrected with temper, and with due allowance for the difficulties under which the authors to be corrected must necessarily have laboured; although it must be confessed that sometimes blunders may be found of a nature well calculated to try the patience or rouse the indignation of an Irish scholar.

Another object of great importance which Mr. Curry has kept steadily in view during the progress of the Catalogue, has been the noticing of other copies of the tracts or poems described, whenever the existence of such copies was known to him: and his accurate acquaintance with the contents of the Irish MSS. of Trinity College, and those in the possession of Messrs. Hodges and Smith,\* the only two great collections accessible to him for this purpose, rendered Mr. Curry peculiarly well qualified for such a task.

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\* Since purchased by the Academy.

In reference to the history of the MSS., of such of them, at least, as are of any high antiquity, it was of great importance to collect together the numerous memoranda, short scraps of poetry, dates, signatures, and other entries, which are frequently to be found on the margins of MSS. These are often mere scribbling, and often written from pure wantonness, or for the purpose of trying a pen; but they very frequently contain information of singular interest, shewing who were the ancient owners or possessors of the MS., and sometimes giving facts and dates of which we have no other record. A most remarkable example of the value of these apparently trifling scribbblings will be found in Mr. Curry's account of the *Leabhar Breac*, upon whose history the most important light has been thus thrown.

The autograph volume of the *Four Masters*, which is one of the glories of the Academy's Library, may also be mentioned as a MS., whose history Mr. Curry's researches have greatly illustrated. By a comparison of it with the MS. (also an autograph) in the Library of Trinity College, Mr. Curry has succeeded in identifying the handwritings of its different compilers, and to assign to each the portion of these *Annals* which he appears to have compiled, or at least to have transcribed.

When any document occurred of peculiar interest, as an historical tale, or ancient deed, or singular narrative, Mr. Curry has very generally given an abstract of its contents. This has been sparingly done, from a wish to avoid swelling the Catalogue to too great a bulk; but it is of more importance than it might seem to be at first view, especially if the Catalogue should ever be published, as furnishing to those who are at a distance, the means of identifying the works described with MSS. in other collections.

Dr. Todd having read some extracts from Mr. Curry's Catalogue in illustration of the foregoing remarks, concluded by stating, that about five volumes still remained to be cata-

logued, including the important volumes, the Books of Lecan and Ballymote, whose examination would take some months, and that the Council have therefore been under the necessity of applying to the Academy for a further grant of money to enable Mr. Curry to complete the work.

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It was resolved by the Academy that the sum recommended by the Council be granted for this purpose.

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December 11.

SIR WM. R. HAMILTON, LL.D., President, in the Chair.

Matthew Dease, Esq., William M'Doughall, Esq., Sir Montague Chapman, Bart., James H. Pickford, M.D., Edward Bewley, M.D., and James S. Eiffe, Esqrs., were elected Members of the Academy.

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Professor Kane read a paper on the Chemical Composition of the plants of Flax and Hemp.

In those plants which are cultivated for the purpose of being ultimately employed as food, it is found that certain constituents are withdrawn from the soil, partly of an organic and partly of an inorganic character, which give to the plant, or to certain portions of it, the constitution that adapts it for sustaining the animal organism. Thus nitrogen, alkalies, and lastly, phosphates, &c., are found as components of plants, and the value of the crop yielded by a certain surface of ground is proportional, generally speaking, to the materials which the crop has taken up. If, therefore, wheat, or oats, or potatoes exhaust a soil, the agriculturist does not suffer thereby, for he is paid for the materials of which they have exhausted it, and when he replaces that loss of material by fresh manure he but invests a certain capital, to be delivered at a profit in the next season.

Many plants not employed as food, but ancillary to our civilization as luxuries, or as utilized in the arts, are similarly